



The Daily Oregonian.

THURSDAY MORNING, JULY 7, 1881.

HANDWRITING.

It is not the handwriting on the walls, a phrase or two, to stamp speakers and back writers that we are now talking about, but simply the accomplishment of writing a good hand and properly punctuating the composition. It seems a little strange that in the age of practical things so little importance is attached to this most necessary accomplishment. Of course, it is a small circle—the ability to write well is a *sic quis non*. A humor might as well attempt to change the forms of his exquisitely delicate art with an iron edge, as the accountants to post books with a scrawl, a scrawl and a illegibility. But generally men, women and children of every grade and employment think no more about their handwriting than they do of the color of their hair, or the fashion of the spans they set out. Natural advantages are all they depend on. It is a well-known fact that handwriting often becomes hereditary as the form of the features or the tone of the voice. We have seen this fact plainly transposed in families, even as we have seen the transmission of peculiarity of hands and feet. This has been received as an indication that nature is everything in the case, and it is born to write a good hand, a hand indifferent or bad. But little stress is laid upon the power of education and training, and hence the fault is left of innumerable schoolmasters on paper who dignify their operation by the name of writing. Outside of the technical and professional pride in calligraphy honorably held by our mercantile circles, there exists an indifference not to say contempt, for this indispensable accomplishment. As though writing is an indispensable to a decent education, so much training is submitted as will enable the subject to form the letters compact and neaten them with more or less beauty. But so soon as this "low level" reached all care and pains are thrown aside, and the operator goes on through life the master of a deformed creature of a beautiful art, though he happens himself entirely possessed of all that can be known about it, and all that may be necessary to practice in it.

There is nothing perhaps in human experience, unless it be bad spelling, in which more arrant stupidity is exhibited than in the habit of loose, formless and slovenly handwriting. A clear and legible hand, with good spelling and correct punctuation, is as much demanded in a writer as good grammar is in a speaker. What would be thought of an orator who should attempt to instruct his audience or move their hearts by uttering a discordant jargon, interspersed only here and there with words of plain speech? The man should learn to articulate first, before he attempts to communicate his opinions. Now let us extend the illustration. Speech addresses thought to the ear, and therefore should be distinct; writing addresses thought to the eye, and therefore should be legible. A man writes you a letter, perhaps on an important subject. You can read it, or if you do not succeed in reading it, the expense of time and labor is great. Journalists are subjected to this annoyance for no more than other persons. No man can be called educated until he knows how to write for the press and publish "copy" in perfect shape for the printer's hands; and yet every day the journals receive articles, many of them from prominent and educated men, or men who suppose they are educated, which are written in execrable style, the orthography abominable, and the punctuation—well, even the use of capital letters is scarcely known, and the only thing saving man is in a dash, which often than otherwise is put in the wrong place. This can all be borne from persons who make no pretensions to education or literateness, and who are simply contributing news items or notices of that kind. But with pretentious articles on theological, educational, metaphysical, or other abstract subjects, are received, contributed by persons who never learned how to write presents. Few more exasperating trials than the endeavor to make something out of them; and much impulsive rending of paper, with inward fuming if not with open execration, is apt to follow. Perhaps after some days an indignant notice is received from the writer, who wants to know why his article has not been printed, and who demands its return. Such note is needless to say, seldom soothes the ruffled temper of the editorial office.

The deliberate assailants of the powers of conscience and the other personal rights of man should all be universalists. Only in such belief can they justify themselves. We do not say that every one, by trying, can learn to write an elegant hand; nor is it elegant handwriting that is desired. What should be studied and striven for till it is attained is a plain legible hand, and proper attention to the easy and common rules of punctuation. The day has passed when a miserable handwriting, coupled with slovenly disregard of punctuation and of the general appearance of manuscript, can pass for proof of genius. It seems hardly ever necessary that a profound thinker should make such manuscript as nobody can read.

TOO MUCH COTTON.

Within a few years the cotton crop of our southern states has increased from 3,000,000 bales to 6,500,000. The people of that section have naturally a pride in the fact and have boasted over it without meaning to show that the old theory concerning the necessity of slave labor was incorrect, but simply to illustrate the grand possibilities of their states under free labor and the natural increase of capital and consequent development of enterprise. But the facts and figures produced at the recent meeting of the national cottoners' association show that there may be too much cotton raised, that the business may be overdone. On the 6th inst., after a lingering illness, David A. May, aged 30 years, formerly of Naples, Italy, and a native of New York, died at the residence of Dr. H. H. Homery, 290 First street, at 2:30 P. M. May 27.

NEW TO-DAY.

WANTED—A GOOD HOUSEKEEPER AND A NURSE FOR JAMES E. TAYLOR, JR., 111½ W. 12th Street, New York City.

WANTED—A RITTENHOUSE MILLINERY, THE NATIONAL, NEW YORK.

HOUSE WANTED—LARGE BOARDING-HOUSE, 11½ W. 12th St., New York City.

WANTED—A FIRST-CLASS DRESSMAKER TO WORK ON COMMISSION, IN MINVILLE & CO'S, 141 Third Street.

ENGAGED FOR SALE—TWO H. P. PORTABLE ENGINEERS, LAMPS, IRONING-HOUSE, ETC.

WANTED—A HONEST, THOROUGHLY UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS, CALL AT 10 NORTH SIXTH STREET, PORTLAND.

WANTED—RELATABLE MAN FOR FAIR STATE TO manage and sell the trade, customers, etc., our new Portland business. JOHNSON & SWANSON, 14th and Oxford Streets, Portland.

WILHELMETTE Engine Co., No. 1, Regular meeting every Saturday evening at 8 P. M.

WILHELMETTE Engine Co., No. 2—Regular monthly meeting, 1st Monday in each month, at 8 P. M.

WILHELMETTE Engine Co., No. 3—Regular monthly meeting, 1st Monday in each month, at 8 P. M.

WILHELMETTE Engine Co., No. 4—Regular monthly meeting, 1st Monday in each month, at 8 P. M.

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WILHELMETTE Engine Co., No. 7—Regular monthly meeting, 1st Monday in each month, at 8 P. M.

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WILHELMETTE Engine Co., No. 9—Regular monthly meeting, 1st Monday in each month, at 8 P. M.

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